

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 00057

LIMDIS

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TAGS PFOR CO

SUBJ: COMMENTS OF EX-PRES LLERAS RESTREPO ON US-LA RELATIONS

1. KNOWING THAT I WAS TRAVELING TO WASHINGTON SHORTLY, FORMER PRES CARLOS LLERAS RESTREPO INVITED ME FOR A DRINK AND A BRIEF CONVERSATION. HE SAID HE WANTED TO EXPRESS HIS GRAVE CONCERNS AT THE GENERAL ATMOSPHERE SURROUNDING US-LA RELATIONS AND, IN-DEED, THIRD WORLD-DEVELOPED WORLD RELATIONS. HE SINGLED OUT THREE PARTICULAR PROBLEMS AS THE FOCUS OF HIS CONCERN: A) THE CUBAN ISSUE; B) THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CONFRONTATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY AMONG LA STATES; AND C) THE COFFEE PROBLEM. HE IN EFFECT WAS ASKING ME TO CONVEY TO WASHINGTON HIS PLEA A) THAT THE US FACILITATE OAS ACTION TO LIFT CUBAN SANCTIONS AND LEAVE MEMBER STATES FREE TO DEAL WITH CUBA, IN ORDER TO PROTECT THE INTEGRITY OF THE RIO TREATY COLLECTIVE SECURITY SYSTEM; B) THAT THE US NOT BACK AWAY FROM LA BUT SEEK TO STRENGTHEN ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH LA, EVEN AS A SPECIAL INTEREST, AS A MEANS OF COUNTERING WHAT HE CALLED THE UNDESIRABLE TENDENCY OF LA NATIONS TO ORGANIZE SEPARATELY IN ORDER TO BARGAIN WITH AND CONFRONT THE US; AND C) THAT THE US CONSULT WITH COLOMBIA AND OTHERS AND SEEK TO REACH A MUTUAL AGREEMENT ON COFFEE, WHICH WAS A QUESTION OF PRIMARY CONCERN TO 14 LA COUNTRIES, ALL THIS AS A WAY OF DEMONSTRATING INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND INTERDEPENDENCE IN THE VITAL AREA OF FORTH TRADE.

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2. LLERAS' VIEWS ON THE FIRST TWO POINTS, ESPECIALLY ON THE NATURE

OF THE US RELATIONSHIP TO LA, CLOSELY PARALLEL THOSE OF FORNMIN LIEVANO (BOGOTA 11387), A POLIT RIVAL AND CRITIC. THIS, PLUS OTHER EVIDENCE OF SIMILAR VIEWS BY OTHER PERSONAGES OF DIVERSE POLIT AFFILIATIONS, SUGGESTS THAT THERE MAY BE A "COLOMBIAN" VIEW THAT DOES NOT AGREE WITH THE STRATEGY OF CONFRONTATION WITH THE US, AND POLARIZATION OR SEPARATENESS, AND RATHER ADVOCATES MUTUAL ACCOMMODATION AND COOPERATION--VIEWS THAT WOULD SEEM VERY MUCH LIKE OUR OWN. IF THIS IS RIGHT, THIS SUGGESTS IN TURN THAT COLOMBIA COULD WELL BE--IF WE WORKED AT IT--ONE OF OUR BEST ALLIES IN SEEKING HEMISPHERE CONSENSUS AS TO THE NATURE OF THE NEW DIALOGUE AND OUR MUTUAL RELATIONSHIPS.

3. CUBA: DR LLERAS STATED THAT THE WAY THE QUITO CONFERENCE TURNED OUT WAS ADVERSE TO THE VITALITY OF THE INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM. THE CONFERENCE SHOULD PERHAPS NEVER HAVE BEEN CONVOKED WITHOUT CERTAINTY AS TO HOW IT WAS GOING TO TURN OUT. BUT, NEVERTHELESS, THE SITUATION WAS DIFFICULT. THE FRUSTRATION FELT BY SOME NATIONS OVER FAILURE TO LIFT THE SANCTIONS AND PERMIT EACH TO DEAL WITH CUBA AS ITS INTERESTS DICTATE, WAS LEADING TO THE OBVIOUS INCREASED RESORT TO UNILATERAL ACTION, E.G. VENEZUELA, IN DEFIANCE AND DISREGARD OF THEIR TREATY OBLIGATIONS. THIS GUTTED THE TREATY. AT THE SAME TIME A VITAL COLLECTIVE SECURITY SYSTEM, I.E. THE RIO TREATY, WAS NOW MORE ESSENTIAL THAN EVER NOT ONLY TO HANDLE EXTRA-CONTINENTAL THREATS, BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY INTRA-HEMISPHERIC CONFLICT, AND HE CITED THE POTENTIAL OF SUCH DISPUTES AS PERU-CHILE AND THE PROBLEM OF ARMAMENT RACES AS EXAMPLES. YET THE SYSTEM WOULD NEVER BE ENERGIZED OR MODERNIZED UNTIL THE CUBAN ISSUE WAS LAID TO REST. HE DEPLORED VENEZUELA'S ACTION. HE THOUGHT COLOMBIA MUST STAY FAITHFUL TO ITS COMMITMENT TO THE SYSTEM AND SHOULD NOT ACT UNILATERALLY, BUT HE RECOGNIZED THAT PRESSURES WOULD NOT PERMIT AN INDEFINITE EXTENSION OF THE STATUS QUO. HE THEREFORE EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT FOR THE SAKE OF THE SYSTEM THE US WOULD HELP FACILITATE OAS ACTION TO LIFT SANCTIONS AND REMOVE THIS ISSUE FROM AGENDAS.

4. LA CONFRONTATION: THERE WAS UNFORTUNATELY A GROWING CONVICTION IN LA THAT THE LA'S SHOULD ORGANIZE AMONG THEMSELVES TO PRESENT A UNITED FRONT TO THE US, TO CONFRONT US AND TO INCREASE THEIR LEVERAGE. HE CITED AS AN UNFORTUNATE DEVELOPMENT THE VENEZUELAN CALL FOR A LA CHIEFS OF STATE MEETING. HE DEPLORED THIS TENDENCY.

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HE THOUGHT IT WOULD NOT WORK, AND THAT IT INCREASED THE GENERAL CONFRONTATIONAL TENDENCY IN THE WORLD BETWEEN DEVELOPING AND DEVELOPED

NATIONS, LESSENING RATHER THAN INCREASING THE CHANCE FOR MUTUAL ATTACK ON COMMON PROBLEMS. HE THOUGHT IT DEPLORABLE TO CONCEIVE OF AN OAS WITHOUT THE US, OR OF A POLICY THAT SOUGHT TO EXCLUDE THE US FROM DELIBERATIONS AND TO ENGAGE WITH US ONLY ON A CONFRONTATIONAL, NEGOTIATION BASIS. THIS, HE EMPHASIZED, IGNORED

THE FACT THAT LA NATIONS AND THE US HAD GREAT COMMON INTERESTS, NOT ONLY BILATERALLY BUT WITH REGARD TO HOW WORLD PROBLEMS ARE RESOLVED. THE UNFORTUNATE PART, HE ADDED, IS THAT THE CLIMATE WITHIN WHICH OUR APPROACHES HAD TO BE FORGED WAS NOT GOOD EITHER IN THE US (RISE IN PROTECTIONISM, ETC.) OR IN LA (RESENTMENTS AND NATIONALISM).

5. COFFEE: AN EXAMPLE OF A PROBLEM WHICH HAD THE UNFORTUNATE PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSEQUENCES, HE MENTIONED, WAS COFFEE. THE SUGGESTION IN THE NEW US TRADE LAW THAT PRODUCER GROUPINGS WOULD BE PENALIZED WAS PERCEIVED WITH GREAT APPREHENSION BY LA WHICH FEARED THAT THE US WOULD TRY TO "PUNISH" ANY MOVES TO IMPROVE COFFEE PRODUCER POSITIONS. THIS KIND OF APPROACH WAS PSYCHOLOGICALLY BAD. ON THE OTHER SIDE, HE THOUGHT IT THE HEIGHT OF STUPIDITY FOR PRODUCERS TO EXPECT THAT AN AGREEMENT COULD BE REACHED WITH CONSUMERS THAT PUT THE LATTER IN A DISADVANTAGED POSITION. THE CONSUMING COUNTRIES APPROACHED COFFEE OR ANY OTHER COMMODITY AGREEMENT IN THE SHADOW OF THE OIL SITUATION, AND WERE VERY SENSITIVE TO BEING PUT UNDER PRESSURE.

6. LLERAS SAID THAT IT APPEARED THE UPCOMING COFFEE TALKS IN LONDON WOULD REACH NO RPT NO CONSENSUS, AND HE THOUGHT IT A MISTAKE TO INSTITUTIONALIZE ANOTHER FAILURE. PERHAPS THE DISCUSSIONS COULD BE POSTPONED. IN ANY CASE, HE HOPED THE US MIGHT CONSULT WITH COLOMBIA AND OTHERS AND EARNESTLY SEEK A FORMULA FOR REACHING MUTUAL AGREEMENT ON THIS PROBLEM. IT WOULD REQUIRE MATURITY AND COMPROMISE ON THE PART OF ALL, BUT IT WAS ESSENTIAL TO PROVE THAT NATIONS COULD WORK OUT MUTUAL TRADE PROBLEMS.

7. COMMENT. THE IDENTITY OF VIEWS ON THE FIRST TWO POINTS, ESPECIALLY REGARDING THE NATURE OF THE US RELATIONSHIP TO LA BETWEEN LLERAS AND FORNMIN LIEVANO IS INTERESTING. LLERAS IS OF COURSE, A SHARP CRITIC, EVEN A POLITICAL OPPONENT, OF THE CONFIDENTIAL

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LOPEZ ADMIN, AND LIEVANO AND LLERAS DO NOT LIKE EACH OTHER PERSONALLY. THE CLOSENESS OF THEIR VIEWS, PLUS INDICATIONS THAT WE HAVE HAD OF SIMILAR VIEWS BY OTHER DISTINGUISHED FIGURES SUGGESTS THERE MAY BE A "COLOMBIN VIEW" REGARDING THESE BIGGER QUESTIONS THAT PARALLELS OUR OWN. ALL THIS IN TURN SUGGESTS THAT COLOMBIA COULD WELL BE--AS A LARGE AND RESPECTED COUNTRY IN THE HEMISPHERE-- ONE OF OUR BEST ALLIES IN ANY EFFORT TO OBTAIN CONSENSUS AS TO THE NATURE OF THE NEW DIALOGUE AND THE NATURE OF OUR RELATIONSHIPS. VAKY

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